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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES**

3 November 1955

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 78-55

SUBJECT: Consultants Meetings of 13-14 October 1955
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PARTICIPANTS

Chairman

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Consultants

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Board of National Estimates

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Staff Members

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I. MOTIVATIONS AND SCOPE OF PRESENT SOVIET POLICY

1. The discussion proceeded from a consideration of the present main lines of Soviet policy to a more detailed examination of Soviet policy in particular areas. The chairman opened the meeting by soliciting opinions on paragraph 2, NIE 11-13-55, "Soviet Foreign Policy in the Light of the Summit Meeting." The paragraph under discussion described

1/ 13 October only
2/ 14 October only

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the motivations of current Soviet policy. In brief these were: (a) Stalin's death and the Soviet leadership's freedom for greater flexibility; (b) recognition by the new leaders that the old policy had led into a blind alley; (c) recent nuclear developments; (d) economic strains within the USSR; and (e) a calculation that softer policies would bring greater dividends.

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2. The consultants agreed that all these factors were operating to influence present Soviet policy, but there was less agreement concerning the relative weight which the various factors carried in Soviet decisions. [] argued that nuclear warfare danger and economic pressures were constant factors and were therefore less important than the other factors noted in the estimate. [] 25X1 agreed that certain factors had been present for years. However, he underlined the importance of Stalin's death and the probability that the present leaders are more aware of the implications of nuclear developments and economic difficulties. [] 25X1 took the view that the USSR had become more concerned about the dangers of nuclear war during the past two years. He felt that the Soviet leadership might reasonably have concluded, on the basis of statements by US leaders, that the US was seriously weighing an alternative policy of war. Thus the USSR might well have considered it necessary to pacify the US and the West, and cause a retraction of US power in Europe. If anything, [] would be inclined to increase the importance of the nuclear factor as a determinant of the present line of Soviet policy. [] felt that the most important factor is the Soviet calculation that Western strength and unity might be impaired by a softer Soviet policy.

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3. The consultants explored the problem of reconciling the present conciliatory trend of Soviet policy in Europe with the evidences of less amicable Soviet policy elsewhere. [] discounted the possibility that other than the Presidium members have any effective voice in policy making. [] disagreed with the statement in NIE 11-13-55 that the Soviet leaders might have to take into account adverse domestic reactions if they reverted to a tough policy after pursuing a relaxation policy for some time. 25X1

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4. [] believed that the present relaxation in Europe was dictated by Soviet anticipation of emerging crises in the Far East and by the intention to keep the US isolated from its European allies in such circumstances. He felt that the USSR would expect, and perhaps agitate, little crises which it would plan to manipulate

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to the disadvantage of the US. In particular he foresaw an inevitable crisis in Indochina where the USSR, operating through its Viet Minh ally, can profit "just by letting the ball roll down hill." [] doubted that the USSR would wish a Far Eastern crisis of sufficient proportions to catalyze unified Western opposition. [] expressed the opinion that the USSR probably does not want crises as such but foresees that they will come about. He expected that the Soviet leaders would seek to avoid even minor crises if it appeared that the US might resolve them advantageously. 25X1

25X1 5. There was a general disposition among the consultants to believe that the present Soviet policy would last for an extended period of time, some thought for perhaps as long as five or ten years. [] believed the present phase might last for ten years. In his opinion the Soviet leaders would jeopardize their gains if they turned back in the near future and they would be unable to make use of the soft policy again for a number of years once they had abandoned it. [] agreed but added that developments in the Middle or Far East might force a change in Soviet policy after about five years. [] suggested that the present policy is designed to disarm and weaken the West. At some point the Soviet leaders may conclude that they have achieved optimum results. At such a juncture, is it not conceivable that the USSR would be strongly tempted to seize the auspicious moment for a drive on the West?

25X1 6. There was little support for the proposition that the Soviet leaders had become more concerned with the USSR as a great power than with the expansion of Communism as a revolutionary movement. [] admitted the possibility of some such evolution but believed that the Soviet leaders would not close off opportunities for furthering Communism. [] observed that the West is simply dealing with a more active Soviet diplomacy which by no means excludes the continued operation of the Communist underground. [] insisted that it would be inaccurate and confusing to attempt to distinguish between Soviet power goals and ideological goals. The Soviet leaders believe in the power of the state, but they also have a simplified, ideologically colored view of their ultimate objectives. 25X1

25X1 7. [] believed that at the October meeting of the foreign ministers the Soviet leaders would seek to demonstrate to the Germans that progress toward unification could not be accomplished at the four-power level. He also registered disagreement with NIE 23-55, [] He regarded the estimate 25X6

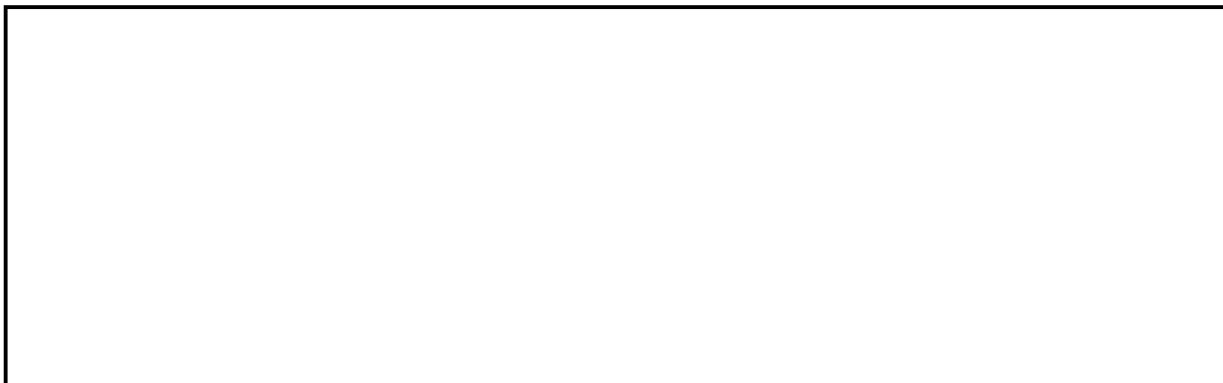
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8. With respect to the Middle East, [] described the situation from the Soviet point of view as follows. There is a stalemate in Europe, and possibly also in the Far East. The remainder of the world is largely made up of backward countries where subversion has not been strikingly successful in the past. The Soviet leaders probably feel now that there are opportunities for profitable diplomatic maneuverings in these areas. Consequently, it is now the Soviet line that assistance from the USSR will be available to the Arab countries which indicate willingness to abjure Western commitments. [] added that the Soviet leaders must recognize the possibility of an Arab-Israeli war and that consequently they must have decided to run the risk of such an eventuality. [] believed that the aim of the USSR is to establish a claim to participate in big power regulation of the Middle East. He thought that the Soviet leaders would calculate that a little war in the Middle East would help to achieve this end. [] observed that if war occurs in the Middle East popular opinion in the Arab-Asian world would be sympathetic to the Soviet position. [] agreed, noting that the US would be forced into a pro-Israeli, anti-Arab role. 25X1

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9. [] emphasized the economic limitations on the USSR's ability to follow through on offers of aid to the Middle East and South Asia. However, he noted that the impact of the offers cannot be discounted. [] was more impressed with the economic capabilities of the USSR, arguing that it is more able than the US to move quickly on targets of opportunity. 25X1

II. ARMAMENTS INSPECTION

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10. There was general concurrence, with some dissent from [] and [] with the thesis of SWIE 11-11-55, "Some Implications of a 25X1

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System of International Armaments Inspection." The estimate argues that an inspection agreement would offer the USSR considerable but not insurmountable difficulties in terms of internal political control.

[] believed that numerous foreign inspectors in the USSR would have an unsettling political effect. [] pointed out, however, that the Soviet leaders could easily enough accept an inspection plan and then throw roadblocks in the way of its effective implementation. [] maintained that the estimate overemphasized Soviet ability to cope with the threat posed by foreign inspectors. At the same time, he believed that the Soviets would probably overestimate the threat to their political control posed by the inspectors.

11. [] argued strongly that the USSR could accommodate large numbers of foreign inspectors without endangering internal political controls. He noted that the new leadership has been modifying its security controls and may be achieving greater efficiency. Moreover, twenty years of conditioning in distrust of and vigilance against foreigners on the part of the citizenry offers a substantial security cushion for the regime. He also argued, in reflecting on factors favoring Soviet acceptance of an inspection plan, that the USSR regards a surprise attack by the US as much more conceivable than would anyone who understood the US political system. All the consultants agreed that the phrasing of the estimative problem was unfortunate and that it is misleading to indicate that Soviet acceptance of inspection arrangements would lead to anything more substantial than Communist participation in such other supervisory arrangements as these in Korea or Indochina.

III. YUGOSLAVIA

12. The consultants were in general agreement with the judgments in NIE 31-2-55, "Yugoslavia's International Position." [] remarked that the estimate should have dwelt more on the internal Yugoslav implications of Tito's maneuvering between the Blocs. [] contended that Tito is somewhat more dependent upon Western aid than the estimate implies. [] stressed that the question of Soviet-Yugoslav-Satellite relations is of extreme importance and will require further study in future estimates.

13. [] believed that the Khrushchev-Bulgaria visit to Belgrade had strengthened Tito's domestic position. Khrushchev's airport apology vindicated Tito vis-a-vis Yugoslav Cominformists and Titoists alike. He also noted that Soviet friendliness would weaken non-Communist opposition in Yugoslavia since such opposition has probably counted on Tito's dependence on the West to weaken his Communism. [] discounted the likelihood of effective Soviet penetration of Yugoslavia through closer ties since he believed Tito to be stronger than ever. He thought Tito was interested in probing to discover how far the Soviets are willing to go in relaxing tensions. The Soviets in turn may wish to use Tito as a bridge for approaching the Socialist parties in the West.

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IV. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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[redacted] In [redacted] opinion Egyptian public opinion may nevertheless force the RCC to act against its better judgment. If there develops a struggle between Egypt and Israel, the pressures in Iraq at the lower levels of the population will be so intense that it will be extremely difficult to keep Iraq off Israel's back. The elite Iraqi may not agree with the masses but probably will be forced to go along with the anti-Israeli war.

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15. [redacted] wondered if the traditional inter-Arab rivalries would not be submerged during a time of Egyptian-Israeli conflict. [redacted] doubted that even an Egyptian war against Israel could overshadow the antagonisms within the Arab world. He admitted that in the event of such a war the Arab states would be likely to participate, with varying degrees of enthusiasm. However, Arab rivalries would become most evident if the war went badly for Egypt. In these circumstances the Iraqi might argue that their best contribution to stabilizing the situation would be to form a greater Syria.

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16. The consultants were pessimistic about a peaceful resolution of the Egyptian-Israeli difficulties. It was agreed that the Soviet leaders have succeeded in opening a new area of conflict between the US and the USSR, and that recent Soviet policy poses an extraordinarily delicate and intricate problem for the US. [redacted] said that if the Israeli attack Egypt the USSR might achieve prestige gains by appealing to the UN for an international force to put down the aggression. [redacted] noted that win or lose the Arabs will remember that they received armaments from the Soviet Bloc and that the US armed Israel. The consultants speculated that possibly an international "honest broker" could be found to influence Israel against a belligerent course of action. [redacted] suggested that the USSR might indicate its willingness to withhold arms from the Arabs in return for the dismantling of US bases abroad.

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V. NIE 100-7-55: WORLD SITUATION AND LONGER TERM TRENDS (Staff Draft)

17. The consultants commented favorably on the Staff Draft as a whole. However, there were numerous criticisms regarding scope and detail. In particular the consultants believed that the paper tried to project too far into the future. All agreed that more attention should be paid to China and Indochina. [] believed 25X1 that the draft over-estimated Bloc flexibility in fairly stable areas such as Western Europe. He advocated toning down the paper's concentration on Bloc policies in stable areas of the world. The Bloc is unlikely to engage us in areas where the US is strong, but around the periphery where we are weak. What, for example, is going to be Soviet policy toward an aspiring world power like India? Will not the leaders of India and Yugoslavia seek to take advantage of the Soviet soft policy to go along on their own? [] agreed 25X1 that the draft should place much more emphasis on the relatively backward world areas and on countries with neutralist ambitions.

[] also believed that the role of the neutral and backward states should be further explored. The crisis is not yet upon us in Africa. Should not the estimate tell us more about this area so that we can be prepared? He would also like to see concentration on the probable role of our allies and what it will take to keep NATO a going concern.

[] added that an omission was the possible effect of the erosion thesis on the Satellites. [] doubted this since the new Soviet policy is for export only. He did not anticipate internal difficulties in the USSR if the Soviet leadership eventually decided to reverse its conciliatory policy. The change could be blamed on US intransigence. [] thought that increased Soviet efforts to "use" the UN might be developed somewhat.

18. [] protested that the draft gives the impression that this is a world without uncertainty and change. [] felt that there should be more on the Soviet tactic of manipulating little crises, especially in the Far East, so as to maximize gains while inhibiting US action and contributing to a deterioration of NATO or a dissipation of NATO resources. He added that in Europe the USSR has little more that it can afford to give away, but grave problems remain unresolved. The people of Europe are likely to become very much aware that on really big problems Soviet policy continues to be inflexible.

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19. [] regarded Indochina as an irresistible opportunity for Communist China and were very pessimistic regarding the survival of South Vietnam. Both were agreed that the draft should indicate that there is much greater Chinese interest in Vietnam (and a higher degree of danger there) than in the offshore islands. [] believed that the growing magnitude of the China problem requires more attention in the draft on Communist intentions toward Southeast Asia.

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